P@X Online Bulletin
Peace Studies Group

Centre for Social Studies – School of Economics – University of Coimbra

June 2008 **-** Nº 10

Media and Peace

SUMMARY

Editorial

The relationship of the media with peace is, at best, extremely controversial. This edition of P@x intends to contribute to the reflection on the variety of shapes that this relationship assumes.

Often media fuel armed conflicts either through the construction of stigmatising images of the collective other, or through the dissemination of a conflictual culture, based on the identification of the other as threat and the naturalisation of strategies of response to this characterisation. Far more than the so-called 'war journalism', often crucial to disclose the mystifications which sustain wars, it is within daily journalism that the instrumental function of the media in war culture construction is forged. Competent exercises of self-reflexivity on the part of journalists and other media professionals have enabled a better understanding of the close relationship between the spectacularisation of common information, dictated by market rules, and the over-simplification of societies and cultures, the de-contextualisation of the history of tensions and conflicts or even the caricaturisation of wars as computer games. The on growing role of the media in post-conflict processes is no less equivocal. Taken as one of peacebuilding missions' priorities, the media are often called upon developing pacification strategies integrated in the global project of liberal peace. This function, however, tends to exclude the questioning of the ideological tenets and the social and economic consequences of standardised policies encompassed within this global project.

In this context, the proposal of Peace Journalism constitutes a challenge to the dominant way of thinking the role of media in societies. Object of criticism by those who perceive it as castrating freedom of information, Peace Journalism questions, above all, the political sense of objectivity, wrongly equated to neutrality. For those who share the idea that "theory is always for someone and for some purpose", as claimed by Robert Cox, the information conveyed by the media takes also part of this neutrality critique.

The apology of war heroism and 'superficial' pacification are not, definitely, the only paths presented to the media in its relation to peace. P@x as a media tool intends to confirm precisely this.

José Manuel Pureza

P@X Theory

Interview with María del Carmen Gascón *, by Rita Santos

The Media and peace culture

RS – How did the idea of analysing the role of the press in the creative resolution of conflicts and peace culture building come up?

MCG –The project itself, like many others, was born out of a specific concern: the idea that the media influence significantly our perception of the world. And this awareness derives mainly from my own work experience in the radio, where I worked thirty years ago, and from my involvement in and my interest for non formal education. Since I started my career in the field of education, I believed back then and even more today that non formal education, that is, everything we learn outside the school and the universities, intervenes decisively or at least equally, in the structuring of our perceptions of the world and that, for this reason, the media are significant in the construction of a peace culture, much alike their proven influence in the construction and dissemination of a war culture.

RS – Why have you chosen the press as the subject of your research, often regarded as a media falling into disuse?

MCG – At first, I chose the press, because I wanted the study to have an international focus and dimension and the press seemed easier to accede to and analyse than, for instance, television, which was the media I had chosen initially. Thus, I started by analysing the press, but not longer after that I realised that, chiefly in the African continent and in Latin America, radio was of utmost importance in conflict prevention and resolution. Hence, I started to extend the subject of analysis of the study and ended up analysing not only the press, although it remains the most developed topic of the research, but also the radio, videogames and free advertising, among others.

RS – In your book, you utilize the myth of the Minotaur to describe the current media landscape and their role in contemporanean societies. Can you elaborate on the parallels you draw between these?

MCG – The myth of the Minotaur is about a monster which is locked up in a labyrinth and demands victims in order to remain alive. I have the impression that we all live in a complex and fascinating labyrinth (the world), where half beast and half human monsters reside – the media. The victims of these Minotaurs can be people themselves, who forget to live their lives and begin living the lives of those who work in and express themselves through the media. These Minotaurs often push us to a certain area of the labyrinth, showing us only its positive aspects and successes and revealing other corners of the labyrinth only when something abnormal and unusual occurs. This is a theme which worries me tremendously. However, there is also a human side to these Minotaurs, where I believe all those who praise Theseus [the Greek hero who killed the Minotaur and released its victims], media professionals as well as consumers who face with humour the struggle for better media, lie. Furthermore, in the labyrinth there are also the threads of Ariadne, which I associate to media organisations and people who work with the media, hard working and idealistic people who, throughout history and in the present, have believed and claimed that other media are possible or, at least, necessary and weave threads and connections in this direction.

RS - How would you summarise the main findings of your investigation?

MCG - If my study conveys anything new, it is indeed the presentation of a didactical and utopical perspective of the media. It is true that I begin my study by researching the meaning and praxis of media communication, but the main contribution of my study is the emphasis of the importance of media literacy for the recognition of the media influences in our lives and for the development of a critical and creative stance towards these very same influences, that is, to contribute to the improvement of our ability to analyse, create and present positive and alternative proposals to media products and approaches.

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In this respect, I think the most important issue has to do with stereotype analysis, that is, being attentive to what is shown by the media, why are these aspects shown to us and, above all, which are the aspects that are not shown. In my opinion, this is critical. I have the impression that these Minotaurs are indeed monsters, but that there are also other beings, close to these Minotaurs, who cover our eyes with crystal blindfolds, impeding us to see reality and thus helping to create invisible people and invisible situations. In sum, my main contribution is to produce tools in order to analyse and debate what communication for peace can be. It is not enough, in my opinion, to declare that media images and discourses produced and conveyed about the South are incomplete. It is necessary to question ourselves about which images and discourses would be more adequate and accurate. In this sense, I seek to open up debate, pose questions, hoping that, in the future, more than answering to these questions, we would be able to generate new interrogations and concerns. The field of communication, like many other research fields, evolves when the questions we pose change, more than when all the answers are found.

RS – How was the research process that now culminates in the book?

MCG – The present research started in 2002, but I have been researching in the field of media and non formal education for longer than that. The first thing I did was to get to know what existed in this field. I contacted many people, several organisations which work with these themes and I also contacted with, mainly through the internet, people from Latin America and Africa.

Regarding the methodology, I focused on the construction of the theoretical foundations of the study, using as the work developed by others as ground basis and, simultaneously, on the conception of pedagogical activities on the journalistic treatment of certain topics with the purpose of bringing people from NGOs, teachers and citizens in general closer to the field of media in a more critical and creative manner.

RS- In your opinion, do you think there are still resistances on the part of the media professionals in interpreting their work as situated and thus experience difficulties in perceiving their profession as an ethical and political commitment? Does the theory of objectivity still maintain a powerful appeal?

MCG - Media organisations, media products and media professionals themselves are a product of an era and of a particular situation. In general, mainly in some western countries, we live a somewhat disillusionment towards the social and collective dimensions, maintaining, conversely, an individualistic and economicist vision of society. There are people with a great ethical and social commitment, while others aren't. And, in my opinion, both can be good professionals. Yet, despite doing a dignified job, their work could positively be improved if they had greater social and political awareness. There are also some people disillusioned about the journalistic world, that resent the 'structures of the game' once they disfavour their work.

Regarding objectivity, I do not believe in it, neither as value nor as an absolute end. In my view, objectivity should be perceived as a tool only, and should not be mistaken with neutrality. I prefer the idea that if you aren't part of the solution, you are somehow part of the problem. And thus, you are either a journalist that potentiates the solution of a given problem, or you are closer to the elements that originate the problem in the first place. I admire those who dedicate themselves to be part of the solution, despite the several structural and professional constraints that lie ahead. I tie up the concepts of objectivity and non objectivity to the way solutions are perceived and approached by the media in general and journalists in particular. Hence, objectivity is neither a synonym of negativity, nor negative realism. In my opinion, objectivity must mean to take sides, giving voice to all intervenients, obviously.

RS - How do you interpret the new proposals and perspectives, such as Peace Journalism and Preventive Journalism? Do these seem necessary and realistic to you?

MCG - All these new proposals are valuable and necessary.

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I think that thanks to the professionals involved in peace journalism, citizen journalism and preventive journalism, amongst others, something is changing in the media. If the citizens are interested in and can afford to dedicate some of their time, they can now accede to media which allow them to learn more and better.

RS – *A responsible and ethical journalism on armed conflicts and other forms of violence depends not only from journalists, but also from readers, listeners and tv viewers. Do you ulga que o seu livro e outros podem contribuir para uma maior alfabetização mediática?*

MCG -My book *Comunicando Paz. Otros Medios de Comunicación desde el mismo Laberinto* definitely aims to contribute to media literacy. It contains around seventy different activities which seek to provoke and to break certain stereotypes, while, at the same time, analyse and value media discourses and images on topics such as domestic violence, terrorism, political conflicts, "natural disasters", etc., despite this practical component being accompanied by a theoretical background which illuminates the labyrinth in which we all live.

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P@x Observatory

Peace Media resources

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Peace builders

Comunidade Segura
Brazilian website on human security, with a special focus on Latin America and the Caribbean. It contains dossiers on public security, youth and armed violence and small arms control, as well as special reports and interview series with public security experts.
(www.comunidadesegura.org.br)

Fundação Hirondelle
Non governmental organisation active in war and post-war contexts, supporting the development, professionalisation and management of media organisations, particularly radios.
(www.hirondelle.org)

Canal Solidario
Spanish communication project, part of the international network OneWorld, which disseminates, through an Internet website, news and resources on solidarity, development, peace, human rights and social inclusion. Led by a team of journalists committed to the idea that media should serve social change.
(www.canalsolidario.org)

Medios para la paz
Non governmental organisation, constituted by more than eighty reporters, founded with the purpose of designing journalistic tools, made by reporters to reporters, for a responsible coverage of the Colombian armed conflict and peacebuilding efforts. Currently focusing in Latin America, it has been investing in the production and dissemination of journalistic information and research on subjects related to armed conflicts in the region.
(www.mediosparalapaz.org)

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Peace builders

Institute for War and Peace reporting

International network of media for development organisations, with offices in Europe, Northern America and Africa, working for the reinforcement of local journalism in countries at crisis, namely through training sessions devised for journalists and other media professionals, dialogue facilitation initiatives and support to the production of reliable information, as well as support to the production and dissemination of research journalism products on countries undergoing war or transition from authoritarian regimes.
(www.iwpr.net)

Search for Common Ground

International non governmental organisation, whose mission is to contribute to the development of media organisations in the African and European continents. Through its programme "Radio for Peacebuilding in Africa", it seeks to support and encourage the use of radio as a communication tool effective in the deconstruction of stereotypes associated to poverty and conflicts.
(www.sfcg.org)

Internews

Media development International non governmental organisation, whose mission is to support the flourishing of independent media organisations and improve access to information in developing or post-war countries through training initiatives on media management and production, and support to the production of electronic media contents.
(www.internews.org)

Balkan Investigative Reporting Network

Network of local reporters, editors and trainers established in 2005 with the support of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, with the purpose of supporting quality research journalism production on political, economic and social themes. It facilitates continuous training sessions and the dissemination of quality journalist production.
(www.birn.eu.com)

Panos Institute

Non governmental organisation established in 1968 with the aim of supporting media pluralism. Currently, its three main areas of action are International Migrations and the Media (Europe), Pluralist media for peace and democracy (Central Africa) and Media in the Mediterranean. Its main activities include: supporting the adoption and application of legal and regulatory frameworks appropriate to the practice of journalism; supporting the emergence of strong national and regional professional organisations; strengthening the technical and financial viability of media organisations, as well as media professionals; and media education.
(www.panosparis.org)

International Media Support

Non governmental organisation established in 2001 with the objective of supporting local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition to remain operative and professional. Currently, its three main areas of engagement comprise media and conflict, media and democracy (particularly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia countries, undergoing transition) and media and dialogue (in the Arab world and Iran).
(www.i-m-s.dk/)

Instituto de Periodismo Preventivo y Análisis Internacional

Association constituted by reporters, International Relations experts and researchers of diverse backgrounds dedicated to the production and dissemination of information on war and crisis situations committed to the pacific resolution of conflicts. Its activities include support and development of research, training sessions on the theoretical and practical foundations of preventive journalism and the publication of the journal *Revista Electrónica de Periodismo Preventivo*.
(http://www.periodismopreventivo.org/quienes_somos.html)

Radio Okapi (Democratic Republic of Congo) (www.radiookapi.net)

Radio Star (Liberia) (http://www.starradio.org.lr)

Radio Miraya (Sudan) (http://www.mirayafm.org/)

World Association of Community Radio Associations (http://rvsf.amarc.org/)

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PEACE MEDIA: AN AGENDA OF RESEARCH, AN AGENDA OF INTERVENTION

In 1946, the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO declared that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed. Being more than 50 years old, the idea underlying this statement has given rise to the beginning of a line of research which has introduced media as an important tool within peace building, clearly contrasting the historical record of media as promoter of hate (e.g. Germany, during the Nazi regime).

Since the 1960s an increasing consensus about the importance of directing media information and programming towards bringing closer together parties in a conflict and inverting or preventing the structural and cultural dynamics, widely known as fuelling and legitimizing violence, has started to mature inside Peace Studies. The idea of peace media has been timidly emerging.

This theoretical proposal has seen its importance growing within the critical Peace Studies agenda but has also assumed one of its own. Markedly constructivist, this peace media research agenda has addressed the interaction between media and peace through three different research guidelines: Peace Education, Development Communication and Peace Journalism. If the first one, considering the potential of the media to change attitudes and shape the perspectives of the actors in terms of promoting understanding and peace, assumes a wider approach (possibly including the two remaining), the second and the third one are more specific in their approach. Peace Journalism, created in 1970s by Johan Galtung, fosters clear journalistic practice deliberately compromised by peace values while Communication Development highlights the importance of development of communication processes, in each community, which involves local participation and interaction with a view to improving the living conditions and development of people. Three common aspects may be found within these three guidelines: a positive idea of peace (Galtung, 1996), a self-evident recognition of the importance of individual and collective mindsets in the choice between violence and peace and, most of all, the idea that people and their specificities are the protagonist of the whole process. These points identify this proposal and underline its cohesion as an academic project.

At the end of the 1980s, this theoretical proposal was adopted by political and institutional international responses, specifically the UN in its peacebuilding missions, and also NGOs and bilateral donors within post-conflict scenarios. Since then media intervention has largely increased. Amongst the most common positive interventions [1] there are three which should be emphasized: the training of journalists, the development of legal structures to guarantee freedom of expression and above all the establishment of peace media, i.e., media which aim to contribute, by means of their programming, to combat everything which at the individual subconscious level or in the collective tradition, might encourage the perpetuation and the legitimization of violence.

It is precisely in the latter form of intervention (e.g. *Studio Ljambo* in Burundi or *Radio Okapi* in Democratic Republic of Congo) that the twin agendas of research and intervention have started to diverge. The necessity of focusing on the subjectivity of peace postulated by the academic proposal contrasts with externally imposed nature of the intervention agenda. External editors, the absence of local participation at the level of technical and programming decision-making and the obvious and uniform presence of the western mindset in programming is clear evidence of this intervention policy. The reason for this inconsistency lies on one hand, on the relevance that the liberal agenda and its standard operational procedure have assumed within peacebuilding missions (Clapham, 1998) and on the other hand, on the fact that, as Sheila Dalas, from Radio United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, has stated "the UN is good at dealing with Governments, but to deal with the people at the grass-roots level, this is where the radio comes in". As with other non-state actors, the main aim of peace media action is to consolidate civil peace, which is, in turn, a crucial dimension to legitimise, at population level, the recipe for liberal peace (Richmond, 2005).

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This is the way and the model which external actors believe to be the ideal in order to (re)build a sustainable peace. However, it is precisely here that the risk lies – the contribution to an unsustainable peace. It is now increasingly recognised that people's active participation is an essential component of peacebuilding. Peace must be self-reflective (Cockell, 2000: 22-23). Any intervention with the intent of building a sustainable peace is doomed to failure unless the target population is involved in the whole process. The risk is, instead of passing from standardization to adaptation, moving from standardization to real collapse.

Confrontation between these two agendas – research and intervention – goes beyond the balance between theory and practice and raises questions at the level of the connection between power and knowledge, underlying the sometime quite slippery relation between academic proposals and their political and ideological implementation. However, it would be cynical, on one hand, to think that peace media, within reconstruction scenarios, are merely a propaganda actor as they have undeniably been developing a good work at inverting cultural violence towards a peace culture on the ground. On the other hand, research lines towards the legitimization of the centralized and markedly ideological practices have also been recently developed.

It is not a manicheist vision of research and intervention which is being highlighted here, but yet a clear recognition of the need of renewing the research agenda, which has postulated peace media, by means of introducing critical diagnoses. The importance of this step forward is intimately related to the increasing media intervention projects number and complexity in war-torn societies and to the need of improving the models of intervention in order to bring it closer to the true protagonists of peace – the people.

Sofia José

[1] International media assistance can be twofold: positive (the training of journalists, the development of legal structures to guarantee freedom of expression and above all the establishment of peace media) and coercive (bombing or jamming of hate media).

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Peace Journalism (PJ) has been experiencing considerable growth in the last decade in many countries of Western Europe, North America and other countries, mainly those facing the burden and the lack of hope of intractable conflicts, such as Colombia and Israel. However, that has not been the case in the Iberian Peninsula. In my opinion, this is quite paradoxical, since Peace Journalism could provide a significant contribution to both countries, given its capacity to widen the theoretical horizons of journalism studies and its potential contribution to the improvement of the journalistic profession. Furthermore, the need to tackle existing violences in Spain and Portugal under a non-violent conflict resolution perspective makes the study and analysis of the Peace Journalism proposal even more vital. In fact, taking PJ postulates in order to rethink the role of media in our societies is bound to allow us to analyse the coverage of different realities with different lenses, namely daily violences (such as domestic violence in both countries), phenomena like migration (hitherto subject to "delimited solidarity") (Giró et al, 2006), as well as war and post-war scenarios (specially those most relevant for both countries, such as the former African colonies or, in the case of Spain, the Basque conflict).

Essentially, Peace Journalism is a normative theory that claims that the media can have a positive role in the promotion of peace (Irvan, 2006: 34), provided that media can provide a specific contribution to peacebuiding processes and, secondly, it can contribute to change the attitudes of media owners, professionals and advertisers, as well as audiences, promoting a peaceful minded discourse. In order to accomplish this twofold potential, Peace Journalism operates at two levels: operational and paradigmatical (Manoff, 1998: 5). The operational level relates to the interventions in contexts of conflict, using media as a tool to build and consolidate peace (an example of this is the work developed by the NGO Search for Common Ground, which maintains that the media are "culturally appropriate means to strengthen societies´ capacity to deal with conflicts constructively"). The paradigmatical level, in turn, refers to the critical re-examination of existing media projects and the theoretical endeavours conducted to surpass the cornerstones of conventional journalism, with the purpose of reinventing and empowering the media, giving them a more humane and humanising dimension. In this domain, efforts carried out hitherto have concentrated at the critical evaluation of coverage of conflicts and at the theoretical and operational conceptualization of journalistic values and practices (Shinar, 2007: 2).

As an emerging theory, Peace Journalism can be labelled as "bittersweet", once it has witnessed a marginal development in face of its recognised potentialities. In light of this, the consideration of both the potentialities and constraints of this proposal is indispensable. In relation to the "promises of Peace Journalism", I follow the work of Dov Shinar (2004, 2006, 2007), who underlines the subsequent aspects: the commitment towards the improvement of the journalistic

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profession through awareness-raising about the role of the media in conflict scenarios, thus offering a "road map" to assist journalists in their coverage of wars and crisis situations (Lynch and MacGoldrick, 2005: 5); the possibility to strengthen media's human and ethical values, presenting media professionals with what Galtung labelled as the "ethical challenge" (2006: 1); the prospect of reinventing media ventures as public service organisations, challenging the existing structures that only perceive the media as an industry, and recalling the conception of journalism enshrined in the 1978 and 1983 UNESCO declarations (Irvan, 2006: 34-35), as well as voiced by the defenders of the New World Information and Communication Order of the 70´s and the 80´s and the proponents of the Propaganda Model; and, finally, the potential to widen the current boundaries of the mass media discipline, thus enabling new re-conceptualisations and theoretical challenges.

Despite the encouraging and inspiring nature of these promises, one must recognise the many obstacles that stand in the way of the Peace Journalism option, both operational level and paradigmatical. Some of these constraints have been advanced by authors sceptical of the PJ option (Hanitzsch, 2007; Loyn, 2007) and later recognised by the advocates of this approach, while others have been contemplated since the very beginning of the development of this proposal. At the paradigmatical level, one can point out the following limitations: the difficulty to face the deeply-rooted and essentialist myths of conventional journalism (Manoff, 1998; Peleg, 2006), which do not contemplate the media as mediators of peaceful minded discourses and as potential promoters of positive peace; and the limited number of critical analyses of existing media projects. Within the operational level, the biggest obstacles derive from structural constraints and the reality of media professionals. Structural constraints stem from the news production system and the bureaucratisation of journalistic work, as well as from the capitalist organisation of media and their close ties with dominant political and economic classes; while the limitations associated to media professionals derive from insufficient training, ethical commitment and critical stance, as well as from the weight of a professional culture that tends to celebrate traditional war journalism and discourse (Galtung, 2006:1).

In order to overcome these limitations, the proponents of Peace Journalism should invest on: (1) continuing to develop and refine its philosophical and theoretical premises (Shinar, 2007: 5) in order to transcend definitely the postulates that worship objectivity and related values as the sole aim of journalism and not as a journalistic tool (Manoff, 1998: 3); (2) promoting the application of this theory, which would entail working in three fronts: the education and training of media professionals (university education and specific training); reflection and creation of guidelines for the development of projects of this kind (such as the joint work of ECCP; SFCG and IMPACS, The Power of the Media); and the translation of the

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principles of PJ into norms (Shinar, 2006:), inspiring and articulating the creation of public systems and structures devoted to promote this kind of interventions and commitments systematically.

In sum, there are numerous limitations implicit in the daring proposal of Peace Journalism, however due to its forcefulness and ethical commitment towards non-violence it is a proposal that cannot be ignored.

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The media assume, nowadays, a decisive role in the identification and debate of central topics in our societies, defining often the public agenda. While contributing to shape and form public opinion, they can collaborate in the strengthening of certain societal values and stereotypes, either directly, or subtly, or, in opposition, can promote its dissipation, hence constituting potential catalysts of change. Considering these aspects, analysing the way the issue women and violence, in its several facets, is portrayed by the media is of utmost importance, once it allow us to reflect upon the discourses produced and conveyed on the several dimensions of violence exerted by and upon women - expressions (physical, sexual, domestic, psychological and armed), roles and prevention and response strategies - and question how (and if) these are able to inform public debate on these theme.

The press monitoring [1], whose main findings will be presented next, encompassed the analysis of *Público* and *O Globo*, two of the main circulation newspapers in both Portugal and Brazil, particularly within the elites, and also important opinion makers, during July, August and September 2007.

Different violences, different visibilities

From the analysis of the two newspapers, it is possible to identify some general features of the media representations of violences perpetrated by and upon women, despite nuances resulting from the different violence contexts experienced in the two countries.

Generally, news pieces on the women's involvement in violence, either as direct and indirect victims, or as aggressors and direct participants, tend to be granted little attention, with the exception of particularly brutal incidents (homicides, for instance) and occurrences involving celebrities, particularly true in the case of *O Globo*. It is particularly striking the absence of news pieces on women violence, namely domestic and sexual violence violence, once again with the

exception of extreme cases.

Similar to what other studies on media and violence suggest (Penalva, 2002; Ramos and Paiva, 2007), in the coverage of this theme prevail the genres "short" and "article" as well as factual and simple contextual approaches, characterised by limited provision of contextual information and by the use of a reduced number of sources. The main theme of the news pieces tends to be violent incident in itself or the investigation processes and/or judicial proceedings, neglecting its social framework - neither information is provided on the antecedents of violence, potential causes or consequences, nor is there a follow up of the incident. References to positive examples of violence containment and response, namely legislative initiatives, support network creation or exemplary judicial sentences are also limited, as well as allusion to useful information for the victims, such as legislation on intra-familiar violence, support organisations, etc., information only available in more global and yet infrequent articles on the phenomenon. By contributing to crystallise individualised approaches to violence phenomena, specially regarding violence against women, once they tend to underline the direct and immediate effects of violence as well as circumstantial explanations for violent behaviours, these dominant journalistic formats distance themselves from the representation of violence against women as a social and political problem, with connections to other types of violence (namely in relation to its causes, actors and instruments).

Despite these insufficiencies, there are some news articles which stand out as examples of journalistic investigation and comprehensive approach to violence. For instance, the articles "A blow against violence" (*O Globo*, 12 September), "Art and fighting to defeat terror" (*O Globo*, 26 August) and "Every month three women are assassinated by their husbands" (*Público*, 6 July) stand out as examples of critical approaches to the phenomenon of violence, providing an in depth analysis of the urban

Sidebar: KEEPING AN EYE ON THE PRESS - WOMEN & VIOLENCES

and domestic violence incidents and giving voice to positive initiatives of violence prevention and resistance.

Newsworthy women: victims and aggressors

The representation of women's involvement in the several facets of violence in both newspapers reflects mostly cases of victimisation. Women are identified as victims in 89% of the cases and as aggressors in 11% of the cases. In the first group, one includes women directly involved in violent acts (robbery, homicide or injury), while the second group refers to women direct victims of violence (homicide, robbery, injury or threat) and indirect victims (victims' relatives).

News articles on victims of violence (both direct and indirect) range between passive and active representation of victims. As direct victims, women are often violence and discourse objects, being presented by other sources, particularly security forces, relatives, neighbours or the reporter himself/herself. The following titles confirm this trend: "20 year sentence for professor who watered his former girlfriend with gasoline and burned her" (*Público*, 19 July) and "Lost bullet kills mother and injures son in Jacarezinho" (*O Globo*, 16 August).

Besides being objects of violence, women are often the icon of suffering, constituting more than a half of the photo attributes which complement journalistic narratives. In turn, men, usually in the position of aggressors, tend to , being identified as the subjects of violence and discourse.

On the other hand, and despite being little representative in numerical terms, news pieces which have as the main subject women survivors of violence tend to emphasise their roles in the struggle for violence recognition and visibility, thus portraying women's roles besides victimisation and passivity. The articles "No body, a crime without punishment" (*O Globo*, 19 August) and "Professor shot in Ipanema is discharged from the hospital" (*O Globo*, 1 September)

exemplify this, drawing attention to women's roles in the struggle against impunity as well as their participation in solidarity schemes.

Regarding women aggressors or involved in crimes, representations vary between challenging the common standard of femininity - "From the top of her 1.60 m, Rose Peituda leads trafficking" [2] - and the confirmation of the passive femininity stereotype, either by highlighting women's secondary roles within violent/criminal structures or by associating their involvement to a ill-advised moment as well as portraying their actions as externally coerced - "This tragedy can only be explained by Helena's disease."[3] and "Sandra is a nice person. Everything she has done was because she loved him"[4].

Generally speaking, one can conclude that media representations of women and girls in violent contexts tend to reproduce the traditional stereotypes associated to women and women's roles. Despite the absence of directly stigmatising references, there is a disproportionate discourse on feminine victimisation and a yet residual number of positive references to women's agency and resistance. On the other hand, the representations of violent/criminal women seem to go along the same lines: the confirmation of the stereotype of passive and pacific femininity. By portraying women aggressors as almost exclusively in secondary positions within violent/criminal structures and describing their participation as product of coercion, as well as by depicting their direct involvement in crime/violence as contrary to the femininity standard these narratives help to consolidate the perception that female violent/criminal involvement is constrained by external factors. Thus, women's involvement in violence tends to be perceived as non dependent of their will or interest, constituting an "exception to the rule".

Simultaneously, the presence, albeit rare, of justificatory elements of male violent behaviour, particularly in *Público*'s sample, contributes to further reproduce a sexual division of roles based on the categories of

"the protectors" and "the protected".

In sum, despite its influence in opinion making and public agenda setting, the media tend to approach the several facets of violence culture rather unsatisfactory, being likewise little critical regarding its own role in violence culture formation. By revealing a segmented attention upon violent manifestations and actors, neglecting women's diverse involvement in violence as well as violence explanation and contextualisation, the media hinder the comprehension of violent phenomena and, thus, their eradication. If, on the one hand, this dominant portrait of violence contributes to violence trivialisation and generalised perceptions of insecurity, on the other hand, by resting on a partial interpretation of these phenomena, it can lead to the design and implementation of violence containment and prevention unfit to reality or even counterproductive, namely based on the apology of harsher police and criminal approaches.

Furthermore, besides giving space and voice to male involvement in violence, whose visibility is essential, the media should also give space and voice to women's specific, involvement, focusing on their wide-ranging roles and experiences. Giving visibility to women's specific participation in different violent contexts, with the required analysis of its causes, motivations and impacts, is decisive to understand violence and its dynamics and, thus, inform a wider debate on truly effective violence combat and prevention policies. Hence, I echo the words of Bárbara Soares (2007: 140-141) who emphasises that what is important is "a qualitative leap which reflects the complexity of violence/s phenomena. In order to do so, it is necessary to give voice to women, allow them to become discourse subjects, instead of objects, review men's position in media coverage, including them also in the victimisation equation, and associate domestic violence to social and urban violence."

Rita Santos

[1] This analysis was developed in the course of the press monitoring conducted in the project "Rostos Invisíveis" ["Invisible Faces"], a partnership between NEP/CES and the NGO Instituto Marquês de Valle Flor.

[2] "Presa mulher que chefiou tentativa de invasão", *O Globo*, 13 September.

[3] "Mãe mata dois filhos menores e suicida-se num bairro da periferia urbana de Viseu", *Público*, 12 September.

[4] "Sexo, menores e PMs", *O Globo*, 11 August.

[5] "Suspeito de matar esposa em prisão preventiva", *Público*, 17 July.

References:

- Penalva, Clemente, 2002, "El tratamiento de la violencia en los medios de comunicación", *Alternativas. Cuadernos de Trabajo Social*, No. 10, pp. 395-412.
- Ramos, Sílvia e Paiva, Anabela, 2007, *Mídia e Violência, Novas Tendências na cobertura de criminalidade e segurança no Brasil*, IUPERJ: Rio de Janeiro.
- Soares, Bárbara, 2007, "Violência doméstica: é hora de dar voz a mulheres e a homens", in Ramos, Sílvia e Paiva, Anabela, *Mídia e Violência, Novas Tendências na cobertura de criminalidade e segurança no Brasil*, IUPERJ: Rio de Janeiro, pp.140-141.

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NEP's Attic

PEACE STUDIES GROUP (NEP) AGENDA

Publications

Freire, Maria Raquel (2008), **"The Russian Federation and CIS States",** in Edward Kolodziej and Roger Kanet (eds.), *From Superpower to Besieged Global power: Restoring World Order after the Failure of the Bush Doctrine*, Athens GA: University of Georgia Press.

Freire, Maria Raquel (2008), **"Two Unequal Partners: The EU and its Russian Neighbour",** in André Barrinha (ed.), *EU's Conflict Management in the Neighborhood and Beyond.* Lisboa: Fundação Friedrich Ebert.

Freire, Maria Raquel (2008), **"Relações UE-Rússia no Quadro da Presidência Portuguesa: Registos de Continuidade num Contexto de Mudança",** *Relações Internacionais*, Instituto Português de Relações Internacionais (IPRI), n.17, March.

Freire, Maria Raquel (2008), **"As Eleições Presidenciais na Rússia: Continuidade na Mudança",** Occasional Paper n.32, Instituto Português de Relações Internacionais, March (with L.Simão).

Moura, Tatiana; **Pureza, José Manuel** (2008)**, "Viejas, Nuevas y Novísimas Guerras: La Conflictividad desafía la modernidad",** *Recerca. Revista de Pensament i Anàlisi*, n. 7, pp. 165- 185.

NEP's Activities

21 January 2008
Maria Raquel Freire presented the conference **"EU-Russia relations: Justification, Action and Implications",** University of Minho, Braga.

25 January 2008
Paula Duarte Lopes presented the communication **"Genocide: concepts and implications"**, on the occasion of the International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust, at the Secondary School of Oliveira do Bairro, Oliveira do Bairro.

José Manuel Pureza presented the seminar **"Media geopolitics"**, Master in Communication, Culture and Information Technologies, Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, Lisbon.

1 February 2008
José Manuel Pureza intervened at the round-table **"Flujos migratorios, derechos humanos y modelos sociales: que sociedad internacional?"**, Internacional Workshop *Inmigración, Derechos Humanos y Cooperación Judicial Penal Internacional ¿Hacia qué modelo social?*, organised by the Law School of the University of Málaga, Málaga (Spain).

12 February 2008
Maria Raquel Freire presented the seminar **"Complexity in the Strategical Game of Southern Caucasus: Conflicts and (In)Security at the Crossroads of Competitive Interests"**, at the Curso de Promoção a Oficial General, Instituto de Estudos Superiores Militares (IESM), Lisbon.

NEP's Attic

NEP's Activities

From 22 February to 20 June 2008

Sílvia Roque is conducting field work for the projects **"Trajectories of violence dissemination and containment: comparing Bissau and Praia"** (funded by FCT) and **"Portuguese co-operation and human security strengthening in institutionally fragile states. The cases of Guinea-Bissau and Sao Tomé and Príncipe"** (funded by IPAD), in Guinea-Bissau.
(link 1:

From 25 February to 15 March 2008

Katia Cardoso did field work in Cape verde, Cidade da Praia, for the project **"Trajectories of violence dissemination and containment: comparing Bissau and Praia"** (funded by FCT).

28 February 2008

Maria Raquel Freire presented the communication **"The Presidential elections in Russia: Continuity in Change"**, Cycle of Conferences on International Relations, organised by Livraria Almedina and Instituto Português de Relações Internacionais (IPRI), Lisbon.

5 March 2008

Teresa Cravo presented the seminar **"Post war reconstruction processes"**, at the Curso de Formação de Oficiais, Instituto de Estudos Superiores Militares, Lisbon.

6 March 2008

José Manuel Pureza presented the communication **"Failed states: conceptual and political deconstructions"**, at the IV Congresso da Associação Portuguesa de Ciência Política, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon.

Tatiana Moura presented the communication **"From violence proliferation to socially disseminated violence: the failure of the responses to failed states"**, at the IV Congresso da Associação Portuguesa de Ciência Política, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon.

Teresa Cravo presented the communication **"Mozambique and 'state failure'"** at the IV Congresso da Associação Portuguesa de Ciência Política, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon.

Raquel Freire presented the communication **"The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation: Sino-Russian relations under a military and security perspective"**, at the IV Congresso da Associação Portuguesa de Ciência Política, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon (with C.A.Mendes).

Paula Duarte Lopes participated as discussant at the round-table **"Politics and development"**, at the IV Congresso da Associação Portuguesa de Ciência Política, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon.

7 March 2008

Daniela Nascimento presented the communication **"The denial of social and economic rights as cause of conflict in divided societies: a critical analysis of the dominant prevention and reconstruction models.The case study of Sudan"**, at the VI Congresso da Associação Portuguesa de Ciência Política, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon.

14-16 March 2008

Rita Santos participated in the intensive training course **"Research methodologies in the field of small arms and light weapons"**, COST Action 25 "European Small Arms and the Perpetuation of Violence", Brussels (Belgium).

23 April 2008

Workshop **"Invisible faces: taking up the screen"**, with Luís Carlos Nascimento (Cinema Nosso), **Tatiana Moura** (NEP), Ana Isabel Castanheira (NGO Instituto Marquês Valle Flor) and Rita Basílio de Simões (Media and Journalism Research Centre), School of Economics, University of Coimbra, Coimbra.

NEP's Attic

26-29 March 2008
Maria Raquel Freire presented the communication **"The making of Russian foreign policy: lines of (dis)continuity in a process of affirmation",** 49th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association (ISA), San Francisco (USA).

Raquel Freire and **Paula Duarte Lopes** presented the communication **"Rethinking Peace and Violence"**, 49th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association (ISA), San Francisco (USA).

Paula Duarte Lopes presented the communication **"Water With Borders: the Institutional Postponement of International Water Trade"**, 49th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association (ISA), San Francisco (USA).

28 March 2008
Tatiana Moura was awarded with the **Prins Bernhard Scholarship 2007** for the project **"Masculinities and femininities between newest wars and newest peaces"**. The ceremony of took place in The Hague (Netherlands).

Teresa Cravo presented the communication **"Instrumentalising Democracy in Africa - A Critique of Power Structures in Mozambique"**, 49th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association (ISA), San Francisco (USA).

23 April 2008
Presentation of **"Uma mãe como eu..."**, a documentary by Luís Carlos Nascimento. Debate with Luís Carlos Nascimento (Cinema Nosso), **Tatiana Moura (**NEP), Ana Isabel Castanheira (IMVF) and Vítor Nogueira (Amnistia Internacional, Portuguese section). Organised by **NEP** and the NGO Instituto Marquês Valle Flor, Espaço Lisboa Welcome Centre, Lisbon.

29 April 2008
Paula Duarte Lopes presented the communication **"Environmental governance: a sustainable concept?"**, XXIX Colóquios de Relações Internacionais, University of Minho, organised by the Centre of Studies of International relations, Braga.

7-9 May 2008
Katia Cardoso presented the communication **"Urban violence in Cape Verde: causes and impacts",** VI Congreso de Estúdios Africanos en el Mundo Ibérico "Africa: Puentes, Conexiones e Intercambios", organised by the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Casa Africa, Las Palmas, Gran Canaria (Spain).

Daniela Nascimento presented the communication **"The denial of social and economic rights as cause of conflict in divided societies: a critical analysis of the dominant prevention and reconstruction models in Sudan",**IV Congreso de Estudios Africanos en el Mundo Ibérico "Africa: Puentes, Conexiones e Intercambios", organised by the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Casa Africa, Las Palmas, Gran Canaria (Spain).

12 May 2008
Seminar of the Peace Studies Group "The state of the art of Security studies in Brazil", with the participation of Mónica Herz (PUC - Rio de Janeiro), Nizar Messari (PUC - Rio de Janeiro) and Reginaldo Mattar Nasser (PUC - São Paulo), Centre for Social Studies, Coimbra.

13 May 2008
Seminar of the Peace Studies Group "Building a fragile state: the case study of Haiti", with the participation of Paulo Pereira (PUC - São Paulo) and António Jorge Ramalho (University of Brasília), Centre for Social Studies, Coimbra.